

## Frequently asked questions

March 2016

### **Q. Why do you have to conduct work on an existing transmission line?**

A. A refit project is a reinvestment in existing assets to help extend their technical lives. Refitting is a cost effective solution to ensure the network continues to reliably support existing and future demand. These works are necessary as some transmission towers are up to 50 years old and targeted maintenance helps ensure the continued safe, reliable and lowest cost supply of electricity to the community.

### **Q. When will work on these projects occur?**

A. Normal working hours will be 6.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Saturday. No works will take place within residential areas on Sundays or public holidays.

### **Q. How long will you be working near my property?**

A. Weather permitting, the works on each tower will generally take up to six days to complete, which includes around three days of preparing the tower for painting with high-pressure water jets.

### **Q. Is there an exclusion area around the towers for the project works?**

A. Powerlink has a strong focus on the safety of our people, contractors and the community. During works, the area immediately around the tower will become a 'construction site' with restrictions in place to ensure everyone's safety. Only authorised personnel will be able to enter the site at this time. There will be varying distances for these safety exclusion zones based on the area around a tower. A key consideration will be allowing enough distance for the safe and efficient operation of any equipment and appropriate access to the site. Safety signage and temporary fencing will be established.

### **Q. If a tower located on public land is being refitted, can I still use the community facilities around the site e.g. bikeways, parklands or sporting fields?**

A. In accordance with our commitment to safety, we will enact exclusion zones around our towers being refitted, including those located in public or community spaces. We will endeavour to minimise disruption to the community's use of bikeways, parklands and sporting fields. Restrictions to access or use of these areas will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the tower's location and potential safety risks associated with the recreational activities occurring near the site. Any local residents or members of the public in areas near the towers being refitted are required to observe all safety signage and temporary fencing to ensure their safety.



**Q. I live near a tower being refitted, how much notice will I get before you start works?**

- A. Affected landholders will generally receive notification 48 hours before the commencement of the work, unless landholders specifically request more notice during the consultation process.

**Q. How are the towers cleaned prior to painting?**

- A. To ensure a clean surface for painting, we wash the towers with a high-pressure water jet to remove any debris and salt. If the surface is degraded, a garnet grit is included in the water jet to remove any rust and leave clean steel. The garnet grit is a natural, non-toxic and safe material (commonly used by the building, energy and maritime industries). This garnet is often coloured and it falls to the ground close to the tower in the form of a dust.

**Q. What controls do your projects have to avoid any dust coming near my property?**

- A. Each project has tailored environmental management requirements that establish preventative control measures for project activities and outline how potential environmental and social impacts will be minimised and managed. On refit projects, these requirements stipulate that staff and contractors are appropriately trained to complete the works using industry standard and well-maintained equipment. Drop sheets must be put in place to capture as much of the dust as possible for disposal. Additionally, monitoring systems must be used to track potential project impacts, for example using on-site weather monitoring equipment to ensure surface preparation activities do not occur in unfavourable weather conditions.

**Q. Can my vehicles be near a tower while it is undergoing refit work?**

- A. During refit work, the area immediately around a tower becomes a construction site to ensure the safety of all parties and restrictions are put in place while work is being completed. It is therefore advisable to move any unhooded vehicles well away from a tower before work gets underway and observe all safety signage and temporary fencing. Powerlink and its contractors are required to comply with all conditions set out in the comprehensive environmental management requirements with the aim to mitigate, as much as possible, any potential environmental and social impacts. We will consult with any potentially impacted landholders ahead of surface preparation work occurring to ensure residents are aware of possible dust around these locations.

**Q. Should I stay inside while work activities are underway?**

- A. There is no requirement for you to stay indoors during refit projects. However, there will be increased noise levels during the tower painting surface preparation stage that you may wish to avoid.



**Q. How will construction noise be managed?**

- A. As with all of our activities, care will be taken to minimise any disturbance resulting from this essential refit work. The high-pressure equipment used to wash the towers prior to painting will be the activity that creates the most noticeable noise. These noise levels will be higher the closer a person is to the tower. Powerlink will work closely with landholders near towers undergoing refit work, and where possible will schedule high-pressure cleaning activities during times which will reduce impacts on nearby residents. All work is required to be conducted in accordance with our environmental management requirements, including all relevant noise legislation, policies or standards that apply to refit projects.

**Q. How will you prevent the spread of weeds and other pests (e.g. fire ants) onto my property?**

Powerlink's environmental and biosecurity obligations include taking all reasonable and practical actions to avoid the spread of identified weeds, pathogens and pests (e.g. fire ants) during any works we undertake. All refit activities will be undertaken in accordance with the project's comprehensive environmental management requirements to ensure stringent biosecurity practices are observed.

**Q. What is the expected impact on traffic for towers being refitted that are situated along main roads?**

- A. Powerlink and the relevant project contractors will work with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Local Governments to determine appropriate mitigation measures to undertake refit work safely and efficiently in areas close to major roads. Comprehensive Traffic Management Plans will be developed for each project to ensure refit activities minimise impacts to local residents and surrounding motorists. Specific strategies will be adopted as required, for example scheduling works on particular days or times to avoid peak hour conditions, or instituting temporary lane closures. We will endeavour to communicate any impacts on nearby traffic flows to local residents and the broader community.

**Q. If I have any questions about the refit works, who should I contact?**

- A. Each project will have a dedicated Powerlink representative responsible for overseeing contractor activities and ensuring the safe, effective and timely delivery of the project. The contact details for this Powerlink representative can be found on the specific project page on our website ([www.powerlink.com.au](http://www.powerlink.com.au)). Any complaints received will be registered and investigated, and where necessary, actions will be implemented to resolve reasonable and relevant complaints.

